

The art of Arabic calligraphy

In Memory of the late Master Calligraphist,
Muhammed Al-Banaresi

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rabic calligraphy is without doubt an art to be admired. The Arabic language is as attractive in word as it is in writing. It is an accepted fact among all calligraphists that this art is God-given; Allah Ta'ala blesses certain people with the mastery and artistry of converting the spoken word into a work of art.

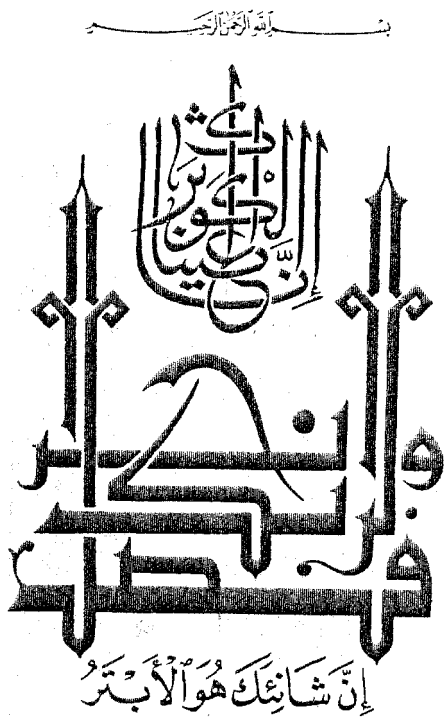
Arabic in written form was firstly developed by the Himyar tribe of Yemen, commonly referred to as the *Tabaabi'ah* named after the famous King *Tubba'* whose mention appears twice in the Holy Quran. These people were the first to set down rules governing the written form of Arabic, and they took this art to considerably high level of perfection. Later it shifted to Herat in Iraq, though the Iraqis did not turn out to be as skilled and artistic as the Himyaris in the field of Arabic writing. From Iraq this art was transported into the Arabian Peninsula where it gained much popularity. All this happened centuries before the birth of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

The real artistry of Arabic writing was developed much later, however, round about the fourth century of the Hijri calendar when the art of calligraphy as we know it today, was actually born. Prior to this Arabic was written in a plain form, without the frills and fancies that calligraphists of today are known for. The first known calligraphist in the Arab world was **Abu Ali bin Muqlah** of Iraq. He was followed by **Abul Hasan Ibnul-Bowwaab**, and later **Ibnul-Adeem** and **Yaqoot** also emerged as exponents of this art. But the former two, viz Ibn Muqlah and Ibnul-Bowwaab are renowned as the pioneers in this field.

Arabic calligraphy comes in different scripts, the famous being Kufic, Raga', Naskh, Nasta'leeq, Diwani, Thuluth or Sulus, the latter being the most common in today's times. The very first script was Kufic, originating from Kufa in Iraq. It was Ibn Muqlah who developed further scripts, and Ibnul-Bowwaab then took this art to a new, amazing level of artistry.

Historians have heaped huge praises on Ibnul-Bowwaab, describing his calligraphy as unparalleled in history.

Below are samples of some of the calligraphic artwork of our former master calligraphist, Muhammad Al-Banaresi of Pakistan, who died last year in Pakistan. May Allah have mercy on his soul and grant him high stages in Jannah. The famous script styles that he used for this artwork are: *Naskh, Thuluth, and Kufic*.



Above: Surah
Kauthar in



Surah Naas is written in the outer ring
in one STYLE and in the centre in a
bigger and fancier SCRIPT



The Hadith: ***Allah is Beauty and He loves beauty***